

Message Text

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20

ACTION ORM-02

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 DHA-02 VO-03 SCA-01 CIAE-00

INSE-00 DODE-00 AID-05 SSO-00 IO-13 /034 W

----- 128028

O 040749Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5880

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR IMMEDIATE

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY SANA

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SINGAPORE 3677

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF, SN

SUBJ: VIETNAMESE REFUGEES ABOARD CAPE ERIMO

REF: SINGAPORE 3537

1. THE THIRTY ONE REFUGEES ABOARD THE PANAMANIAN FLAG VESSEL S.S. CAPE ERIMO ARE STILL ANCHORED OUTSIDE OF SINGAPORE HARBOR LIMITS. THEY ARE IN FINE SHAPE. THE OWNER'S (TAURUS MARINE CO. (PANAMA)) AGENT, TOYO MARINE COMPANY, HAS SENT A SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE TO SINGAPORE TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM ALONG WITH SHIP'S LOCAL AGENT, BORNEO COMPANY. SHIP'S LONG TERM CHARTERER IS SHINWA (JAPANESE COMPANY) AND BARE BOAT CHARTERER IS NIPPON YUSEN KAISHA (NYK).

2. FROM CONVERSATIONS WITH TOYO MARINE REP, IT APPEARS SEVERAL ALTERNATIVES ARE BEING CONSIDERED IN LIGHT OF CONSISTENT GOS REFUSAL TO ALTER POSITION VIS-A-VIS REFUGEES.

A. SHIP COULD PROCEED TO HODEIDA (YEMEN ARAB REPUBLIC), NEXT PORT OF CALL, AND THERE DEBARK THOSE REFUGEES WHO HAD BY THIS TIME RECEIVED PAROLE AUTHORIZATION.

B. SHIP COULD TRANSFER REFUGEES TO ANOTHER SHIP OWNED BY SAME COMPANY ENROUTE TO JAPAN.

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C. SHIP COULD HEAD TO ANOTHER PORT.

D. SHIP COULD REMAIN IN SINGAPORE UNTIL U.S. PAROLE AUTHORIZED.

E. SHIPPING COMPANIES COULD PAY THE \$10,000 PER HEAD BOND ALLEGEDLY REQUESTED BY SINGAPORE IMMIGRATION TO ALLOW REFUGEES TO DEBARK IN CUSTODY OF UNHCR (ALTHOUGH SHIP'S AGENTS BELIEVE THIS MAY BE VIABLE ALTERNATIVE, EMBOFF INFORMED BY MISS FRASER OF UNHCR OFFICE IN KUALA LUMPUR THAT SINGAPORE COMPTROLLER OF IMMIGRATION HAS SPECIFIED THAT BOND WOULD HAVE TO BE ACCOMPANIED BY LETTER OF GUARANTEE FROM SOME GOVERNMENT THAT IT WOULD UNCONDITIONALLY AGREE TO RECEIVE REFUGEES).

3. NYK IS STRONGLY COMMITTED TO ALTERNATIVE (D) AS THEIR NEW YORK OFFICE CLAIMS, AFTER CONTACTING STATE DEPARTMENT, THAT USG WILL SOON ISSUE BLANKET PAROLE DOCUMENT FOR ALL 31 REFUGEES. SINCE EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED IMPRESSION THAT NYK IS UNDULY OPTIMISTIC OVER PROSPECTS OF EARLY PAROLE ACTION, DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO CONTACT NYK'S NEW YORK OFFICE AND CLARIFY DEPARTMENT'S POLICY, PROCEDURES AND LIKELY TIMEFRAME FOR COMPLETING ACTION ON THESE CASES.

4. AS FOR ALTERNATIVE (C), MALAYSIAN HI COM SECOND SECRETARY CONVEYED IMPRESSION TO EMBOFF DURING GENERAL DISCUSSION OF CASE THAT GOM MIGHT RESPOND FAVORABLY TO A REQUEST THAT REFUGEES BE OFFLOADED AT PORT KLANG. THIS CONFLICTS WITH IMPRESSION EMBASSY RECEIVED FROM KL 4352. REQUEST EMBASSY KL COMMENT ON ADVISABILITY OF SUGGESTING TO UNHCR THAT IT APPROACH GOM TO ALLOW TEMPORARY DEBARKATION AT PORT KLANG. UNHCR REP SAMPATKUMAR IS PRESENTLY IN HONG KONG, AND HAS LEFT HIS KL OFFICE WITHOUT INSTRUCTION AS TO HOW TO UNTANGLE THIS DILEMMA. THEREFORE, ANY APPROACH TO UNHCR WOULD HAVE TO BE MADE IN HONG KONG. HOWEVER, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THIS MATTER SHOULD BE TAKEN UP WITH SAMPATKUMAR UNLESS EMBASSY KL BELIEVES THERE IS SOME CHANCE OF PERSUADING GOM TO ALLOW REFUGEES TO DEBARK.

5. WE HAVE HEARD FROM UNHCR THAT THE CONSIGNEE OF THE CARGO HAS GIVEN AN AUGUST 5 DEADLINE FOR THE SHIP TO DEPART SINGAPORE. IF EMBASSY KL BELIEVES THERE IS BETTER THAN EVEN CHANCE THAT GOM WOULD ALLOW REFUGEES TO DEBARK AT PORT KLANG, EMBASSY MIGHT BE ABLE TO PERSUADE SHIP'S AGENT TO SEND SHIP TO PORT KLANG PENDING UNHCR APPROACH TO GOM.

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6. REQUEST EMBASSY KL ADVISE ASAP. GRANT

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NNN

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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